

Appl. No. : 09/676,895
Filed : October 2, 2000

Amendment After Final. By this Amendment, Applicants have also added Claims 26 and 27. Applicants thus respectfully request the Examiner to consider Claims 22-27 in addition to Claims 20 and 21.

The Applied Combination of Nakase et al./Isaka Does Not Render Obvious The Watercraft Recited By Claims 20 and 21

Claims 20 and 21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Nakase et al. in view of Isaka. Applicants have amended Claims 20 and 21 and submitted that Claims 20 and 21 as amended overcome the rejection because the prior art references do not teach or suggest the recited layout of the engine in a watercraft. The Examiner stated in the Advisory Action that the amendment to Claims 20 and 21 raised new issues. In view of Applicants' request for continued examination, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner now to reconsider amended Claims 20 and 21.

Claim 20

Claim 20 has been amended to recite, among other limitations, that the engine comprises a connecting rod coupled to the piston, a crankshaft includes at least one connecting rod journal having an axis about which the connecting rod moves, the engine is disposed within the hull such that the axis of the connecting rod journal lies to one side of the center plane as the crankshaft rotates and both the first and second valve devices are disposed on the other side of the center plane.

Nakase et al. fails to disclose, *inter alia*, that the engine is disposed within the hull such that the axis of the connecting rod journal lie to one side of the center plane as the crankshaft rotates. That is, the axis of the connecting rod journal shown in Nakase et al. patent moves from one side of the center plane to the other side thereof as the crankshaft rotates. When the axis of the connecting rod journal moves to the side where the valves are disposed, the weight of the engine is biased to this side. Thus, the engine arrangement shown in the Nakase et al. patent fails to provide the amount of weight balance in the watercraft that is obtained by Applicant's engine

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arrangement. Isaka does not disclose any connection with the hull. The combination of Nakase et al. with Isaka, therefore, does not teach or suggest all the limitations of Claim 20 as amended. Reconsideration of Claim 20 is respectfully requested.

Claim 21

Claim 21 has been amended to recite, among other limitations, that the engine comprises a connecting rod coupled to the piston, a crankshaft includes at least one connecting rod journal having an axis about which the connecting rod moves, the engine is disposed within the hull such that the axis of the connecting rod journal lies to one side of the center plane as the crankshaft rotates and both the intake and exhaust camshafts rotate about axes that lie on the other side of the center plane.

As discussed above, Nakase et al. fails to disclose, *inter alia*, that the engine is disposed within the hull such that the axis of the connecting rod journal lie to one side of the center plane as the crankshaft rotates. And, again, Isaka does not disclose any connection with the hull. Thus, the combination of Nakase et al. with Isaka does not teach or suggest all the limitations of Claim 21 as amended. Reconsideration of Claim 21 is respectfully requested.

New Claims 26 and 27 Have Been Added In Addition To Previously Added Claims 22-25

Claims 26 and 27 have been newly added in addition to previously added Claims 22-25 to provide further protection of a differing scope for certain aspects of the present invention. Consideration of Claims 22-27 is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections set forth in the Final Office Action are inapplicable to the present claims. Accordingly, issuance of a Notice of Allowance is most earnestly solicited.

The undersigned has made a good faith effort to respond to all of the rejections in the case and to place the claims in condition for immediate allowance. Nevertheless, if any undeveloped

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issues remain or if any issues require clarification, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call Applicant's attorney, William H. Shreve at (949) 721-2895 (direct line), in order to resolve such issue promptly.

Respectfully submitted,

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